

RAVENSWOOD ESTATE
2647 Arroyo Road
Livermore
Alameda County
California

HALS CA-38
CA-38

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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RAVENSWOOD ESTATE

HALS NO. CA-38

Location: 2647 Arroyo Road, Livermore, Alameda County, CA
Lat: 37.39123 Long: -121.46173

Significance: Ravenswood is significant for its association with Christopher Buckley a powerful political figure in San Francisco and as an early vineyard in the Livermore Valley which was an important component of the town's development. It is on the National Register and is a State and local landmark.

History: Ravenswood was built by Christopher Augustine Buckley, Sr., known as the "Blind Boss" of San Francisco politics in the 1870's and 80's. While it served as a summer home for the Buckley family from 1885 to 1920, it was also one of the larger early vineyards in the Livermore Valley, with 100 acres in grapes and winery production of 500,000 gallons per year. In 1931, the estate was acquired by a Catholic order, the Redemptorist Fathers. Called "Villa San Clemente" by the priests, Ravenswood served as their religious retreat for over 30 years. In 1968, Ravenswood was purchased by developer Masud Mehran, who gave the core 32.6 acres to be used as a park. The 1891 Main House and 1885 Tank House were restored in 1979. The 1885 Cottage was restored in 1986.

The property includes the ruins of the winery and distillery, the barn, other out buildings, a newly planted vineyard, and a semi circle of original date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) planted in 1899. Ravenswood is the last remaining historic country estate in the Livermore Valley.

Christopher Augustine Buckley was the son of Irish immigrant, John Buckley who came to California in 1862 in search of gold.

Sources: Interview with Sally Haag and Mary Graham, docents at Ravenswood and interpretive material at the site.

Historic Spots in California by Mildred Brooke Hoover, Hero Eugene Rensch, Ethel Grace Rensch, William N. Abeloe. Revised by Douglas E. Kyle, Fifth Edition, 2002, Stanford University Press.

<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/CA/Alameda/state3.html>

<http://www.noehill.com/alameda/default.aspx?content=National&sequence=name>

<http://www.larpd.dst.ca.us/parks/maps/33.html>

Historian: Chris Pattillo, Landscape Architect, July 25, 2009
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The cottage on the left, main house on the right with mature date palms surrounding the main house and restored vineyard in the foreground (Chris Pattillo, taken March 22, 2009).



Main entry to the main house with foundation plantings including a pair of taxus and a multi-trunk citrus. Date palms can be seen at the right (Chris Pattillo, taken March 22, 2009).